THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Since no final view has been taken, question of giving details thereof or time-frame does not arise.

Research contracts

2675. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry awards research contracts to consultants, NGOs, academic and research organizations, etc.;

(b) if so, the list of the research contracts with the names of the organizations who were awarded the research contracts in the last three years and its progress;

(c) whether the research contracts are illustrated on the website of his Ministry;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) the details of internal process in deciding the topics of these research contracts;

(f) whether the research contracts were awarded through a competitive bidding process;

(g) if so, the criteria adopted for the competitive bidding process; and

(h) if not, the sanctity of the award process?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. The Ministry does not award any research contract to consultants, NGOs, academic and research organizations. However, the Ministry promotes various research activities by providing grant-in-aid to various institutions/ organizations which *inter-alia* include colleages, universities, academic and research organizations, non-governmental organizations etc., for carrying out specific research projects in identified thrust areas of research, under its various programmes.

(b) to (h) Do not arise.

Forest cover area in India

2676. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the "Open Forest" is increasing and "dense forest cover" has been decreasing in the country, particularly in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, details of statistics of past ten years about open forest cover and dense forest cover in the country, State-wise; and

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken to increase the dense forest cover percentage in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No, Sir. As per remote sensing based biennial assessments made by Forest Survey of India presented in tables given in Annexure 1 & 2, the open forest and dense forest cover for the country have remained between 7.95% to 8.82% and 11.32% to 11.78% respectively of total geographic area, between 1997 and 2005.

In Maharashtra the forest cover in open forest and dense forest categories has remained between 7.28% to 6.2% and 7.72% to 9.22% respectively of total geographic area, between 1997 and 2005.

(b) the requisite statistics have been given in the Statement-I and II. (*See* below)

(c) The Government of India is implementing National Afforestation Programme, Integrated Forest Protection Scheme, Assistance for Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for afforestation, regeneration and protection of forests for improving the quality of forest and increasing its density.

Statement-I

Stat-wise details of open forest cover of the country

(area in km.)

State/UT	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
1	2	3	4	5	6
Andhra Pradesh	19,859	19,642	18,810	20,061	20,043
Arunachal Pradesh	14,447	11,091	14,113	15,163	15,389
Assam	8,276	9,171	11,884	14,855	14,814
Bihar	13,224	13,200	2,348	2,459	2,465
Chhattisgarh			18,568	17,016	17,135
Delhi	10	53	73	120	122
Goa	252	251	310	1,014	1,014
Gujarat	5,250	5,504	6,479	8,627	8,577
Haryana	234	515	615	1,049	1,061
Himachal Pradesh	2,961	3,962	3,931	5,431	5,441
Jammu & Kashmir	9,420	9,422	9,389	10,744	10,744
Jharkhand			10,850	10,949	10,969
Karnataka	7,546	7,632	10,835	13,144	13,153
Kerala	1,880	1,894	3,788	5,934	5,935
Madhya Pradesh	48,450	50,211	32,881	34,995	34,931
Maharashtra	22,397	19,951	16,588	19,092	19,092
Manipur	12,481	11,448	11,216	10,734	10,622
Meghalaya	11,613	9,708	9,903	9,874	9,842
Mizoram	14,427	14,552	8,558	11,928	12,378
Nagaland	10,734	9,027	7,952	7,919	7,881
Orissa	20,629	20,745	20,866	20,154	20,180
Punjab	876	895	883	836	835
Rajasthan	9,663	9,562	10,045	11,353	11,380
Sikkim	706	755	802	852	852
Tamil Nadu	8,367	8,398	8,983	10,565	10,604
Tripura	3,727	3,517	3,602	3,093	3,125
Uttar Pradesh	11,036	11,114	4,781	8,148	8,148
Uttarakhand			4,915	6,049	6,044
West Bengal	2,669	2,672	4,347	6,313	6,334
Andaman & Nicobar	127	125	337	633	624

1	2	3	4	5	6
Chandigarh	1	1	4	6	6
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	45	43	68	91	91
Daman & Diu	3	3	4	6	6
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	10	10
Pondicherry	0	0	1	25	25
Total	261,310	255,064	258,729	289,242	289,872
% of G.A.	7.95%	7.76%	7.87%	8.80%	8.82%

Open forest cover of the Maharashtra

(area in Km.)

State/UT	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Maharashtra	22,397	19,951	16,588	19,092	19,092
% of G.A.	7.28%	6.48%	5.39%	6.20%	6.20%

Statement-II

State-wise details of Dense forest cover of the country

(area in Km.)

State/UT	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
1	2	3	4	5	6
Andhra Pradesh	23,431	24,587	24,385	24,351	24,329
Arunachal Pradesh	54,155	57,756	55,647	52,529	52,388
Assam	15,548	14,517	13,406	12,880	12,831
Bihar	13,300	13,274	3,027	3,114	3,114
Chhattisgarh			39,162	38,976	38,728
Delhi	16	35	52	54	54
Goa	1,000	1,000	1,255	1,150	1,150
Gujarat	7,328	7,461	6,434	6,187	6,138
Haryana	370	449	520	527	526
Himachal Pradesh	9,560	9,120	8,976	8,928	8,928
Jammu & Kashmir	11,020	11,019	10,497	10,529	10,529
Jharkhand			11,681	11,620	11,622
Karnataka	24,857	24,835	22,461	22,102	22,098
Kerala	8,454	8,429	9,629	9,661	9,660
Madhya Pradesh	82,745	81,619	42,401	41,150	41,082
Maharashtra	23,746	26,721	28,452	28,422	28,384
Manipur	4,937	5,936	6,673	6,525	6,464
Meghalaya	4,004	5,925	6,632	7,051	7,146
Mizoram	4,348	3,786	7,839	6,655	6,306
Nagaland	3,487	5,137	6,028	6,096	5,838
Orissa	26,312	26,288	28,178	28,199	28,194
Punjab	511	517	745	709	723
Rajasthan	3,690	4,309	4,497	4,468	4,470
Sikkim	2,423	2,363	2,362	2,410	2,410
Tamil Nadu	8,697	8,680	12,009	12,438	12,440

1	2	3	4	5	6
Tripura	1,819	2,228	5,267	5,030	5,030
Uttar Pradesh	22,958	22,902	5,997	5,979	5,979
Uttarakhand			18,439	18,411	18,393
West Bengal	5,680	5,690	6,045	6,076	6,079
Andaman & Nicobar	7,486	7,481	6,284	6,174	6,005
Chandigarh	6	6	9	9	9
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	159	159	149	130	130
Daman & Diu	0	0	2	2	2
Lakshadweep	0	0	12	15	15
Pondicherry	0	0	17	17	17
TOTAL:	**372,087**	**382,229**	**395,169**	**388,574**	**387,216**
% of G.A.	11.32%	11.63%	12.02%	11.82%	11.78%

Dense forest cover of the Maharashtra

(area in Km.)

State/UT	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Maharashtra	**23,746**	**26,721**	**28,452**	**28,422**	**28,384**
% of G.A.	7.72%	8.68%	9.25%	9.24%	9.22%

Problem of elephants in Orissa

†2677. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether increase in number of elephants in Orissa has compounded people's problems;

(b) earlier and current number of elephants in States;

(c) the reasons for increase in number and whether a large number of elephants enter Orissa from Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) steps being taken by Government to save life and property from elephant riot, and the kind of advice and help being provided to State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) As reported by the State Government estimated population of wild elephants in Orissa has marginally increased to 1862 in the year 2007 as compared to 1841 in the year 2002. As such increase in number of elephants can not be said to be the main reason for the people's problem. Earlier and current estimated number of elephants in other States is annexed, as Statement. (*See* below)

(c) The reason for increase in number is breeding. There is not report of elephants entering Orissa from Andhra Preadesh.

(d) The Elephant Range States are being provided financial and technical support under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Elephant to take preventive steps like deployment of anti depredation squads, creation of physical barriers, improvement of habitats etc.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.